



Changing Your Retirement Plan

For Members in the Traditional Pension Plan



The 11-member OPERS Board of Trustees is responsible for the administration and management of OPERS. Seven of the 11 members are elected by the groups that they represent (i.e., college and university non-teaching employees, state, county, municipal, and miscellaneous employees, and retirees); the Director of the Department of Administrative Services for the State of Ohio is a statutory member, and three members are investment experts appointed by the Governor, the Treasurer of State, and jointly by the Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives and the President of the Ohio Senate.

For a current listing of OPERS Board members, please visit www.opers.org

It is your responsibility to be certain that OPERS has your current address on file. If OPERS is not made aware of address changes, we cannot guarantee that you will receive important information pertaining to your OPERS account.

This booklet is written in plain language for use by members of the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System. It is not intended as a substitute for the federal or state law, namely the Ohio Revised Code, the Ohio Administrative Code, or the Internal Revenue Code, nor will its interpretation prevail should a conflict arise between it and the Ohio Revised Code, Ohio Administrative Code, or Internal Revenue Code. Rules governing the retirement system are subject to change periodically either by statute of the Ohio General Assembly, regulation of the Ohio Public Employees Retirement Board, or regulation of the Internal Revenue Code. If you have questions about this material, please contact our office or seek legal advice from your attorney. OPERS is not required to provide health care coverage to retirees or their dependents and will only do so at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.

Changing Your Retirement Plan - Traditional Pension Plan

Members who are eligible to select one of the OPERS retirement plans are also eligible to change their plan once during their public employment.

Members who are not eligible to change their retirement plan selection include those who had accrued five or more years of total service credit as of Dec. 31, 2002, OPERS law enforcement and public safety officers (regardless of the amount of accrued service credit) and OPERS retirees and other state retirement system retirees who return to OPERS-covered employment and contribute to a Money Purchase Plan.

It is important to note that changing your retirement plan is not a retroactive change of your initial retirement plan selection; it is a change in the retirement plan you will contribute to going forward. A change in retirement plans will impact OPERS benefits that may be available to you. This leaflet only provides general information about changing from the Traditional Pension Plan. Your situation is unique.

Eligibility to Change Retirement Plans

If you are actively contributing to the Traditional Pension Plan you have one opportunity to change your retirement plan to the Member-Directed Plan.

Each eligible member actively contributing to OPERS has one plan change opportunity which can be done at any time during their career, regardless of how many times they've changed plans prior to

July 1, 2015, and regardless of their amount of total service credit.

Keep in mind, once you change your retirement plan, the change is **irrevocable** and you will not be permitted to change your retirement plan again.



Before changing your retirement plan, you should meet with an OPERS counselor, over the phone or virtually, to make sure you fully understand how your benefits are affected. Call 1-800-222-7377 to set up an appointment.

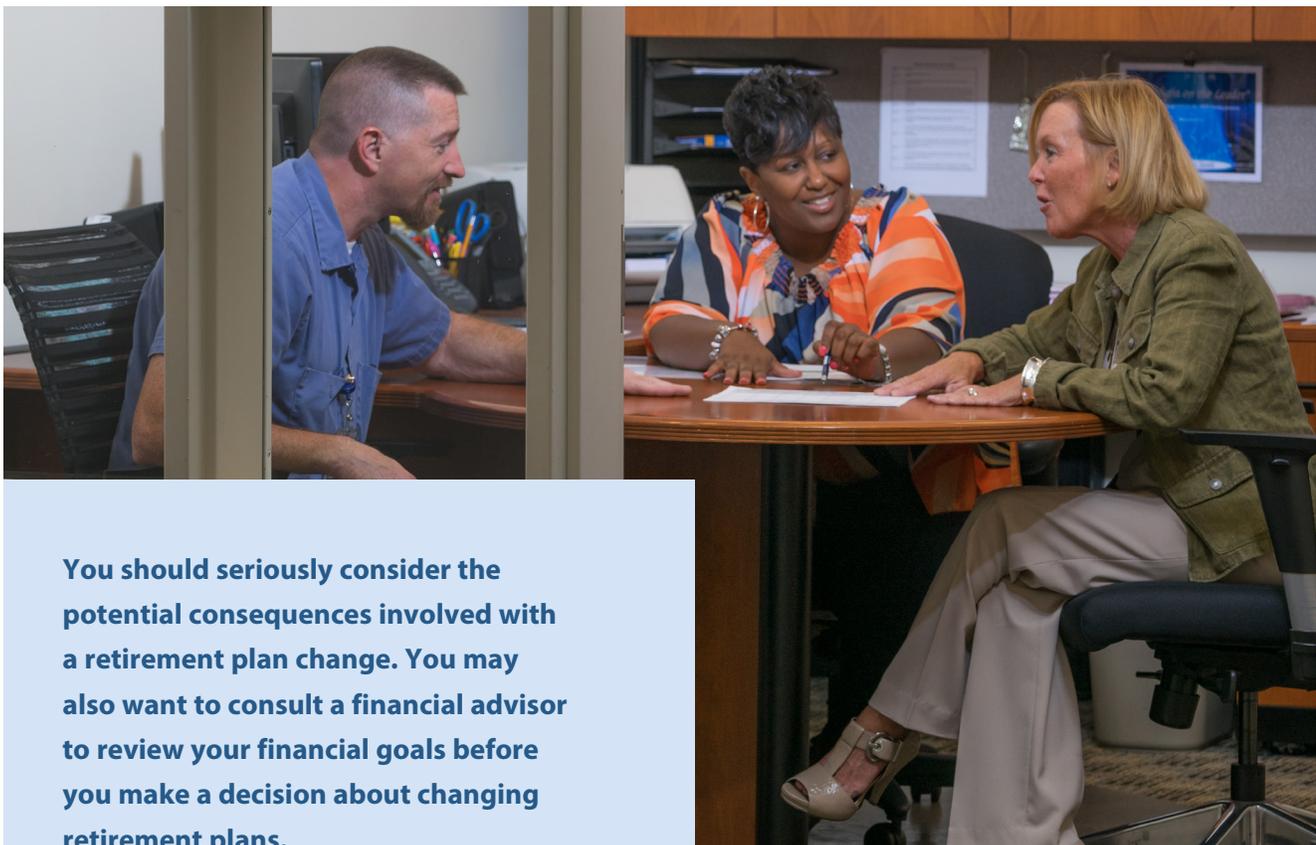
Changing Your Retirement Plan - Traditional Pension Plan

Should You Change Retirement Plans?

Reviewing your original plan selection process and reassessing your retirement goals may help you make a decision about whether to change your retirement plan. Each of the OPERS retirement plans offer many features and benefits (refer to the *Plan Selection Workbook* and *Benefits of Membership Handbook* available at opers.org).

A number of factors went into your decision to select the Traditional Pension Plan and those same factors will also impact your decision to change your retirement plan. For example:

- Do you plan to take a refund or retire from public service in Ohio?
- How long do you plan to be employed in public service in Ohio?
- What benefits are important to you?
- Do you want to begin directing investments in an OPERS individual account?
- Do you have service credit available to purchase?



You should seriously consider the potential consequences involved with a retirement plan change. You may also want to consult a financial advisor to review your financial goals before you make a decision about changing retirement plans.

Changing Your Retirement Plan - Traditional Pension Plan

Consequences of Changing Retirement Plans

Changing your retirement plan has important consequences that will impact both the benefits you have accrued under your current retirement plan and the benefits you will accrue under your new retirement plan.

If you change to the Member-Directed Plan, your benefits under the Traditional Pension Plan will stop accruing and will be based on the contributions and service credit you have as of the date you cease active participation in the Traditional Pension Plan. As long as you have contributions on deposit in the Traditional Pension Plan, your benefits under the Traditional Pension Plan will continue to be administered under that plan.

Service credit and contributions you have accrued in the Traditional Pension Plan, up until the plan change effective date, must stay in the Traditional Pension Plan. The service credit in the Traditional Pension Plan cannot be moved to or purchased in the Member-Directed Plan. It also cannot be combined

with contributions in the Member-Directed Plan to determine eligibility for or the calculation of benefits. If you change your retirement plan to the Member-Directed Plan, this is a prospective change only, meaning you start over in the new plan. Only contributions earned after the effective date of your plan change will be used to determine your eligibility for benefits under your new retirement plan.

If you have at least five years of service in the Traditional Pension Plan at the time you make a plan change to the Member-Directed Plan, you may still apply for a disability benefit under the Traditional Pension Plan within two years of the plan change effective date. If you have service credit available to purchase in the Traditional Pension Plan or in the plan to which you are changing, contact OPERS to set up a counseling session to discuss how this purchase will be impacted by the plan change.

Note: Each of the OPERS retirement plans is a separate, qualified retirement plan. Contributions and service credit under the OPERS retirement plans are not combined for purposes of determining eligibility for, or calculating, benefits under any of the OPERS retirement plans. Except in certain instances, contributions and service credit accrued under each plan are administered under the terms of that plan.

Changing Your Retirement Plan - Traditional Pension Plan

Selection of Investment Options

If you change your retirement plan to the Member-Directed Plan, you will be required to begin directing the investment of your individual defined contribution account, something you do not do in the Traditional Pension Plan. Based on your individual needs and retirement goals, you can select from the OPERS investment options. You will be able to change your investment options at any time throughout your career.

The OPERS Investment Options vary in their degree of risk and reward. They are not guaranteed investments and their performance cannot be predicted. To help you better understand the OPERS Investment Options, contact OPERS at 1-800-222-7377 to speak with a representative, or visit opers.org.

Making Your Plan Change

To begin the plan change process, you must contact OPERS to request the appropriate form.

You also can request a form during a plan change counseling session with an OPERS representative. Once OPERS has received the properly completed form, your retirement plan change will be processed and will take effect on the first day of the month following the date it was received. For example, if your plan change form is received on July 15, your plan change will take effect Aug. 1. Employee and

employer contributions for payroll period end dates occurring after the effective date of the change will be credited to your new retirement plan.

Counseling is recommended to provide you with an opportunity to ask questions about the plans. You can meet with an OPERS counselor, over the phone or virtually, to make sure you fully understand how your benefits are affected if you change retirement plans. Call 1-800-222-7377 to set up an appointment.



Counseling is recommended to provide you with an opportunity to ask questions about the plans. You can meet with an OPERS counselor over the phone or virtually.



Ohio Public Employees Retirement System
277 East Town Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

ISL-L (01/2022)